

DECEMBER 4, 1980

Wintering livestock is going to be a mighty expensive deal in the Shortgrass Country. Feed and hay are so high that the computers at government offices reject such lofty figures.

Quotes on New Mexico alfalfa run close to the price of a Caesar's salad at the best restaurants in San Angelo. Twenty percent range cubes were \$219 at the mill last week. Corn and milo sounded so precious that I figure contracts will be in troy ounces by the time I have the courage to cover our needs.

Goat Whiskers the Younger and several of our other neighbors are going to feed whole cottonseed. I think they are putting the seed in at a little over half the cost of range cubes. Whiskers always is a big winner at the bargain counters. On the same week he bought the cottonseed, he barely missed a charge of transporting stolen goods across state lines for what he did to an old boy up north on a helicopter trade.

It takes a real operator to outsmart a helicopter salesman and cotton gin at the same time. Whiskers claims that over the Christmas holidays he is going to have to have his eardrums patched.

I suggested that he stay still for four days and see whether his eardrums aren't recovered at some distant airport. I know that hats and jackets that kids scatter cross country find their way home. That might be the case of Whiskers' eardrums, as he's been cutting some mighty big swaths handling his helicopter business in Wisconsin and his cattle feeding ventures in the Northwest. Not to mention that his eardrums could be in the lost and found division of an exotic cow sale or maybe covered up in paper in a lawyer's office in San Angelo.

But back to feeding loose cottonseed and saving money. You have to be pretty ambitious to shovel seed out to your cattle. Unless you have an unpapered alien to operate the shovel, sacked goods are a lot more convenient to feed. I am too busy to add stoop labor to my lifestyle. Short-weight, 25-pound blocks have more appeal to my program than grain forks or No. 2 scoops.

Other than a complete dispersal sale in the fall, protein blocks are the best plan for a fellow that likes afternoon domino games and weekend football shows. Good hard blocks thrown up in the cedar bushes off the cow tails make those old gals hustle for their handouts. Coach Tom Landry goes to a lot of work to field a football team like the Cowboys. I am not about to let him down spending my time pouring out cake to a bunch of ungrateful black cows.

I'm going to have to start buying feed by the first of December. No price cuts are in sight. The thickets, however are dense enough to hide a pretty good sized block. I don't imagine I'll worry much once the first bills are paid.